

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 FEA-01 AID-05 CEQ-01 OFA-01 DODE-00

EPA-01 IO-10 L-03 NSF-01 NSC-05 PM-04 USIA-06 OES-03

SS-15 SP-02 INT-05 /095 W  
----- 094792

R 081520Z SEP 75

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2435

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECEM, SNEV, PGOV, ELAB, GR

SUBJECT: ETHYL HELLAS SITUATION - STATUS REPORT

REF: THESSALONIKI 519 AND PREVIOUS

1. REFTTEL REPORTED THAT ETHYL-HELLAS WOULD BE FORCED SHUT DOWN THESSALONIKI PLANT SEPTEMBER 1 UNLESS ETHYL ALLOWED TO USE ITS STORAGE AND SHIPMENT FACILITIES ON PIER 5. OF PORT. IN FACT, ETHYL WAS ABLE CONTINUE OPERATING UNTIL SEPTEMBER 4 WHEN PORT AUTHORITIES PERMITTED ETHYL WORKERS TO RETURN AND BEGIN OPERATING COMPANY'S PIER FACILITIES. THEREFORE, AT THIS TIME ETHYL IN FULL OPERATION. REGULAR PORT DOCK WORKERS, HOWEVER, HAVE NOT RETURNED TO PIER 5 AND REST OF PIER REMAINS CLOSED.

2. HOW LONG THIS SIUTATION WILL CONTINUE IS PROBLEMATIC. ETHYL FACILITIES REMAIN CONVENIENT TARGET FOR ANYONE WHO WISHES TO ATTACK EITHER US OR KARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT. LATEST EXAMPLE IS WELL -PUBLICIZED MEETING OF MAYOR AND PREDOMINANTLY LEFTIST CITY COUNCIL NIGHT OF SEPT. 5, WHICH, AFTER SERIES OF SPEECHES, MOST OF WHICH ATTACKED  
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INSTALLATION AS MENACE TO COMMUNITY, VOTED TO SET UP

COMMITTEE TO STUDY SITUATION AND SUBMIT REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL. RESULTS CLEARLY FORECAST BY PROMINENT FRONT PAGE ARTICLES IN WEEKEND "ELLINIKOS VORRAS" AND COMPANION EVENING PAPER "THESSALONIKI" WHICH LABEL ETHYL PLANT BOMB, WORSE THAN AN ATOMIC BOMB, THREATENING THE CITY. ONLY CALMING MEDIA NOTE TO DATE WAS "THESSALONIKI'S" HEADLINE QUERY SEPT. 8 "IS THESSALONIKI IN DANGER? OFFICIALS SHOULD GIVE TRUTH IN RESPONSIBLE WAY SO NO CONFUSION AND ANXIETY WILL BE CREATED AMONG PEOPLE."

3. STRONG POLITICAL TURN ETHYL SITUATION HAS TAKEN WAS CONFIRMED BY DIMITRI VALALAS, PRESIDENT OF THESSALINIKI PORT AUTHORITY, WHO TOLD CONGEN SEPTEMBER 7 THAT SITUATION IS ENTIRELY POLITICAL NOW. VALALAS CONDEMNED DOOMSDAY PRESS ARTICLES, BUT ALSO ACCUSED ETHYL MANAGEMENT OF NOT COOPERATING IN SEEKING TO RESOLVE SITUATION. HE ALLEGED THAT ON OCCASION ETHYL REPS HAD PROMISED TO IMPLEMENT CERTAIN MEASURES AND THEN FAILED TO DO SO. AT PRESENT TIME ETHYL IS THREATENING TO CLOSE PLANT AND MOVE ELSEWHERE, ACCORDING VALALAS, WHO SAID THIS IS NOT RPT NOT WHAT THE GREEKS WANT. LATTER JUST WANT TO CORRECT ALLEGED POLLUTION PROBLEM AND ETHYL IS NOT COOPERATING IN THIS, HE SAID, ADDING THAT IF ETHYL HAD COOPERATED SIX MONTHS AGO ENTIRE PROBLEM WOULD HAVE BEEN SETTLED.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ISSUE UNDOUBTEDLY BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION AND EXPLOITED BY INIMICAL INTERESTS, VALALAS IS NOT FIRST PERSON WE HAVE HEARD OBSERVE THAT ETHYL HAS CONSISTENTLY TAKEN A "TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT" ATTITUDE TOWARD RESOLVING ETHYL'S PROBLEMS. WHILE COMPANY HAS SENT OVER SEVERAL REPRESENTATIVES FROM ETHYL'S HEADQUARTERS, NONE APPEAR TO HAVE HAD SUFFICIENT LATITUDE TO EFFECTIVELY NEGOTIATE A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM WITH THEIR GREEK OPPOSITES. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH CONGEN OFFICIALS REPS HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY AUTHORIZED ONLY TO REPEAT IN EFFECT STANDARD ETHYL POSITION THAT COMPANY EMPLOYS FINEST POLLUTION CONTROL SYSTEMS AVAILABLE ANYWHERE. SENIOR ETHYL REP HAS NOW RETURNED TO US HEADQUARTERS, WHERE COMPANY OFFICIALS WILL STUDY VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES TO PRESENT SITUATION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ANOTHER ETHYL GROUP FROM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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US EXPECTS TO BE IN THESSALONIKI IN APPROXIMATELY SIX WEEKS TO BEGIN EXAMINATION OF OTHER SITES FOR ETHYL STORAGE FACILITIES NOW IN PORT. GIVEN NINE-MONTH DEADLINE ESTABLISHED IN AUGUST 1975 FOR REMOVAL OF THESE FACILITIES, THIS SEEMS LEISURELY PACE AT WHICH TO APPROACH VERY PRESSING PROBLEM. (SHOULD AGAIN BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT ETHYL HAS CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED IT PRACTICAL IMPOSSIBILITY TO MEET THIS DEADLINE). MAJOR HEAD OF STEAM BUILT UP

OVER ISSUE, AND ITS ATTRACTIVENESS AS VEHICLE FOR  
ANTI-US AND ANTI-WESTERN ELEMENTS IN THIS AREA, MAKE IT  
UNLIKELY THAT IT WILL GO AWAY WITHOUT FURTHER REPERCUSSIONS.  
BRENNEN  
UNQUOTE

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